

General Rules for Punctuation

Comma (,)

- use in a series of three or more entities

Jim swims, golfs, and fishes in the summer.

- use to separate two main clauses joined by and, but, for, nor, yet, or, so

Harold took the day off, and he is planning on resting.

- use between city and state and after state if in the middle of a sentence

Before moving to Denver, Colorado, the Chapmans lived in Buffalo, New York.

- use with dates between day and year and after year in the middle of a sentence

We will graduate on June 6, 1990.

It wasn't until March 15, 1987, that Harvey got his license.

- use after introductory expressions beginning with because, since, while, until, if, despite, in spite of, etc.

If it does not rain this weekend, we can go to the beach.

Because of the traffic jam, we arrived an hour late.

- use before not and but to show contrast

I have come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.

- use before or after a direct address (calling someone by name)

Nell, are you ready yet?

Have you finished your project, Sam?

- use with appositives [words or phrases that mean the same as the word(s) that come

before them]

George Washington, our first president, was unanimously elected in 1789.

- use to set off titles such as M.A., Ph.D., Sr., Jr., Inc.

Colin B. Thornton, Jr., not his father, is president of the bank.

Joyce Byrd, Ph.D., is Director of the English language Institute

- use to set off participial phrases

Hurrying as fast as he could, Marcel caught the bus before it pulled away.

- use to set off direct quotations (using someone's exact words)

Pam said, "My cousin is studying engineering at MIT."

- use with addresses written in sentence form

Send all inquiries to National Business Computers,
1576 Magnolia Dr., East Lansing, Michigan 12450.

- use to set off yes and no in answering a question

No, we are not planning on going to the mountains this spring.

Yes, I received your request for the merchandise.

QUOTATION MARKS (" ")

- use when quoting someone's exact words. Periods and commas always come inside

the quote marks.

Phil said, "The American Revolution began in April, 1775."

"All of us will attend the banquet," said the chairperson.

➤ **NOTE:** Be careful where you place question marks and exclamation points in quotations. If the punctuation is part of the quotation, it goes inside the quote marks.

The coach asked, "Has anyone seen the quarterback?"

Tim yelled, "The building is on fire! Get out!"

- Whereas, if the quote is not a question nor an exclamation, then the punctuation goes

outside the quotation marks.

Are you surprised that the director said, "Take the day off"?

Stop playing "The Flight of the Bumble Bee"!

- use with names of short poems and magazine articles, essays

John Keats wrote "Ode on a Grecian Urn."

- use with foreign words as yet not accepted as regular usage words in English

Not all bullfighters perform on the ground. The "rejoneadores" fight on horseback.

- Do not use quotation marks around titles of your own essays.
- Do not use quotation marks around indirect speech (paraphrasing what someone has said)

that is introduced by the word that.

Helen said that she would arrive at noon.

(These are not Helen's exact words.)

- **NOTE:** When you use a quote within a quote, you need single quotes (') for the inside

quotation and double quotes (") for the outside quotation.

Mr. Markham said in his lecture, "Robert Burns was a great

Scottish poet who wrote, 'Never a lender nor a borrower be.'"

- use to indicate plurals with letters and certain expressions

Sal received 4 A's and 2 B's on his report card.

- Always dot your i's and cross your t's
- Think of the do's and don'ts before you begin any project.

UNDERLINING

- Although underlining is not technically a form of punctuation, it is important to know when to use it. Good writing depends on the ability to use all forms correctly.
- use with titles of books, magazines, newspapers, long poems, works of art, movies, plays, operas, and names of sea and aircraft

Romeo and Juliet is one of Shakespeare's most famous plays.

Hemingway's book, The Sun Also Rises, is about bull fighting.

The Titanic sank over sixty years ago.

The Pietà is one of Michelangelo's greatest sculptures.

NOTE: When writing the title of a newspaper that includes the in the title, do not underline the word the.

the New York Times, the Orlando Sentinel

Exercise: Decide whether to use quotation marks or underlining. Be careful to put the quotation marks in the proper place.

1. Betty said, Leave the dishes on the table until we have finished eating.
2. Our teacher told us to read the plot for Bizet's opera Carmen.
3. Time, Life, and Newsweek are popular American magazines.
4. There was a news article in the Washington Post about gun control laws being debated in Congress.
5. Tom Cruise's movie, The Firm, was a box office success.
6. John F. Kennedy was seriously injured on his boat, PT 109 during World War II.
7. Have you read the poem, 'Twas the Night Before Christmas?
8. One of Jonathan Swift's most satirical essays was called An Immodest Proposal.
9. I think that Gone with the Wind was one of the best movies ever made.
10. Air Force One is the President's private airplane.
11. My mother shouted, Get those snakes and frogs out of my kitchen!
12. Margot asked her friends, Do you want to go skiing in the mountains?
13. Les Desmoiselles d'Avignon was perhaps Picasso's most famous
Cubist painting.
14. Djelaba is an Arabic word for a long tunic worn by men and women.
15. Federico García Lorca wrote a five-page poem, Lament for the Death of Ignacio Sánchez Mejías, a
bull fighter friend of his.
16. After the party the hostess said, Well, I'm glad that's over.
17. No one can forget Salvador Dalí's surrealist painting Persistence of Memory.
18. The angry coach shouted to the players, Get out there and play like professionals!
19. Mrs. Marshall asked the class, Where's Janet? She's never absent.
20. The librarian said that James Michener's best-seller, Mexico, is so popular that she
can't keep it on
the shelf.

Period (.)

- use at the end of a declarative statement

We have only one class tomorrow.

- use after abbreviations: Mr., Mrs., Ms., Dr., Mon., oz., a.m., st. (first), St. (street), etc.
- Acronyms (abbreviations pronounced as words) are not punctuated. SEATO, NATO, UNESCO, SONAR
- use to separate dollars and cents in prices

This coat costs \$59.95.

- use with certain abbreviations such as B.C., A.D., D.C.

The Congress meets in Washington. D.C.

- use with decimals and percents

Judy earned a 3.75 GPA last semester.

The interest rate on our mortgage is 7.825%.

- do not add a second period if you end a sentence with a title or abbreviation that requires a period

My brother's new title is Dr. Joseph Laws, Ph.D.

- do not use a period with ordinal numbers or shortened forms such as 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and words like math, photo, lab

We will be attending the wedding on May 1st in Ohio.

Question Mark (?)

- use at the end of an interrogative statement

Do you know where the Metropolitan Art Museum is?

- use with dates when the exact year is not known

Attila (406? -453), King of the Huns, was called "the Scourge of God" because of his cruelty.

Exclamation Point (!)

- use after a statement of surprise

Harry won the million-dollar lottery!

Colon (:)

- use between hours and minutes of time expressions

The train is due at 6:45.

- use after the salutation in a formal letter

Dear Sir: Gentlemen: Dear Mrs. Greene:

- use before mentioning a list of items or people if the word preceding the colon is not a verb or preposition

Only five people attended the meeting: John, Paul, Sean, Nick, and Toby.

Semicolon (;)

- use when joining two complete, related sentences not connected by and, but, or, nor, for, yet or so.

Phyllis received the highest grades; she got a scholarship to study at Harvard.

- use with the conjunctive adverbs consequently, however, otherwise, nevertheless, and therefore when they connect two main clauses. The adverb is preceded by a semicolon and followed by a comma.

Sid could not pay the light bill; therefore, the company shut off his electricity.

- use with parenthetical expressions (those which serve to qualify) in fact, on the other hand, for example, etc.

Mario never eats spinach; in fact, he hates it. .

- use to separate unlike entities in a list (combination of cities and their states)

The language schools can be found in the following locations:

Kalamazoo, Michigan; Austin, Texas; and Honolulu, Hawaii.

Exercise: Supply all the punctuation and capitalization for each of these

1. we have branches in pittsburgh pennsylvania columbus ohio and wilmington delaware
2. Mark enjoyed your chocolate cake in fact he ate four pieces
3. My daughter loves to paint she has given me three of her pictures
4. having run out of bread and milk Herb hurried to the store before it closed

5. Yes wed be happy to accept your invitation to dinner
6. Ill be in to see dr. corrigan at ten oclock a m
7. its a beautiful day today in kansas city but its been snowing in buffalo since last night
8. peter Flemming m d will be the guest speaker at the womens club luncheon
9. my sister said that i made a faux pas is that good or bad
10. youll have to read the instructions first otherwise the project wont turn out well
11. in the sixth round the champion is leading hes won four rounds
12. the colors in the curtains are yellow orange beige and tan
13. sam bought a new house on n w 41st street but he cant move in until october
14. I got up made breakfast loaded the dishwasher and went grocery shopping
15. is your favorite teacher dr sanders dr banes or dr daniels
16. how can we answer all these questions in 50 minutes asked cindy
17. drinks on the menu included the following hot chocolate iced tea and lemonade
18. betty Phil and Dolly are going to alaska in september
19. my american history class meets every tuesday and Thursday night this spring
20. Next semester my schedule will include the following classes algebra physics art and composition